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GENERAL ASSEMBLY
Fifty-first session
Item 33 of the preliminary list*
THE SITUATION IN THE MIDDLE EAST

SECURITY COUNCIL
Fifty-first year

Letter dated 17 April 1996 from the Permanent Representative of the United Arab Emirates to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

In my capacity as Chairman of the Arab Group for the month of April 1996, I have the honour to transmit to you herewith the text of resolution 5573, which was adopted by the Council of the League of Arab States on 17 April following a special meeting devoted to the consideration of the question of the Israeli aggression against Lebanon.

I should be grateful if you would have the text of this letter and its annex circulated as a document of the Security Council and of the General Assembly under item 33 of the preliminary list.

(Signed) Mohammad J. SAMHAN
Permanent Representative of the
United Arab Emirates
Chairman of the Arab Group

* A/51/50.

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ANNEX

Resolution adopted by the Council of the League of Arab States and entitled "Condemnation of the Israeli aggression against Lebanon and the means to confront it"

The Council of the League of Arab States, following a special meeting held on 17 April 1996 in order to consider the question of Israeli aggression against Lebanon,

Having heard the report by the Lebanese Minister for Foreign Affairs on the continuation and scope of and reasons for the Israeli aggression,

Aware of the serious repercussions which the escalation of the ongoing aggression unleashed by Israel may have for the sovereignty, security and territorial integrity of Lebanon as well as the entire Arab region and the peace process begun after the Peace Conference on the Middle East held in Madrid,

Taking into account the serious consequences of that aggression, which has led to the deaths of dozens and wounded hundreds of civilians, while at the same time forcing more than half a million Lebanese townspeople and villagers to flee from the south and the eastern Bekaa region,

Having been informed of the considerable damage caused to basic economic infrastructures and archaeological and historical sites, which were bombarded by Israeli land, sea and air units in various regions of Lebanon,

Considering that this aggression poses a grave threat to the security of the region as well as international peace and security and constitutes a flagrant violation of the principles of international and humanitarian law,

Recalling its previous resolutions which reaffirmed the right of Lebanon to obtain reparations for the damage, destruction and the loss of human life which Israel's repeated acts of aggression have inflicted on the civilian population and infrastructures,

Recalling also all the resolutions which the Arab summit conferences and the Council of the League of Arab States have adopted in order to express their solidarity with the Lebanese Government with a view to putting an end to the Israeli occupation of Lebanese territory and supporting all the measures taken by that Government to halt that occupation in accordance with Security Council resolution 425 (1978),

Proceeding on the basis of the principles of international legality set forth in the Charter of the United Nations and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights,

Proceeding also on the basis of the Charter of the League of Arab States and the pacts for joint Arab action,

1. (a) Strongly condemns the continuation of the brutal aggression which Israel has unleashed against Lebanese territory and which infringes the sovereignty of Lebanon, the security of its citizens and its territory as well as the inviolability of its airspace and territorial waters and has led to the destruction of archaeological sites, infrastructures and basic installations in various parts of the country;

(b) Condemns Israel, which by unleashing that aggression, has violated the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and international law and is compromising the peace process based on Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973) and 425 (1978);

2. Demands the immediate cessation of the Israeli aggression which is continuing against Lebanon, the halting of the operations aimed at destruction and of the forced mass exodus which Israel has brought about on a very large scale throughout the country, as well as the return of the refugees driven from their towns and villages by that aggression;

3. Reaffirms that the Arab countries are maintaining their solidarity with Lebanon in the struggle against Israeli aggression and demands that the Security Council condemn that aggression and force Israel to implement resolution 425 (1978), which calls upon Israel to withdraw forthwith its forces from all Lebanese territory;

4. Reaffirms the right of the Lebanese people to resist Israeli occupation in Lebanese territory in accordance with the principles of the Charter of the United Nations, particularly their right to self-defence against the occupier, and supports the right of the Lebanese people to demand that Israel provide compensation for the loss of human life and material damage caused by Israeli occupation and aggression;

5. (a) Decides to provide the Lebanese Government with the material and financial support for ensuring the speedy return to their towns and villages of the refugees who have been forced to flee their homes by the cowardly Israeli aggression and calls upon Arab and international humanitarian organizations and institutions to help Lebanon, on an emergency basis and by all possible means, to cope with the tragic situation and the destruction caused by that aggression;

(b) Calls upon the Security Council to oblige Israel to make the necessary compensation for the loss of human life and the destruction of installations and infrastructures as a result of the Israeli aggression;

6. Entrusts the Secretary-General with the task of monitoring the situation and coordinating, as necessary, action by the Arab States with regard to specific measures to be adopted, inter alia, immediate contacts to be made with the sponsors of the Peace Conference, the Secretary-General of the United Nations, the members of the Security Council and the presidency of the Council of Europe in order to bring about the immediate cessation of Israeli aggression, strive to ensure the implementation of Security Council resolution 425 (1978), and put a definitive end to the Israeli occupation;

7. Considers that the session is open and decides that the Secretary-General will report to the Council when he deems appropriate.

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GENERAL ASSEMBLY
Fifty-first session
Items 33, 35, 53 and 56 of the
preliminary list*
THE SITUATION IN THE MIDDLE EAST
QUESTION OF PALESTINE
CONSEQUENCES OF THE IRAQI OCCUPATION OF
AND AGGRESSION AGAINST KUWAIT
THE SITUATION IN BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

SECURITY COUNCIL
Fifty-first year

Letter dated 3 April 1996 from the Permanent Representative of Oman to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit herewith the press communiqué issued by the Ministerial Council of the Gulf Cooperation Council at its fifty-eighth session, held at Riyadh on 16 and 17 March 1996 under the chairmanship of Mr. Yousef Bin Alawi Bin Abdullah, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs of the Sultanate of Oman.

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under items 33, 35, 53 and 56 of the preliminary list, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Salim Bin Mohammed AL-KHUSSAIBY
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

* A/51/50.

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ANNEX

Press Communiqué issued on 17 March 1996 by the Ministerial Council of the Gulf Cooperation Council

The Ministerial Council held its fifty-eighth session on Saturday and Sunday 27 and 28 Shawwal 1416 (16-17 March 1996) at the headquarters of the Secretariat General in Riyadh, under the chairmanship of His Excellency Mr. Yousef Bin Al-Alawi Bin Abdullah, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs of the Sultanate of Oman. The session was attended by:

His Highness Sheikh Hamdan Bin Zayed Al Nahyan	Minister of State for Foreign Affairs of the United Arab Emirates
His Excellency Sheikh Mohammed Bin Mubarak Al-Khalifa	Minister for Foreign Affairs of Bahrain
His Royal Highness Prince Sa'ud Al-Faysal	Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
His Excellency Sheikh Hamad Bin Jassem Bin Jabr Al-Thani	Minister for Foreign Affairs of Qatar
His Excellency Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah	First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Kuwait

The Ministerial Council is pleased to express its deep satisfaction and joy at the recovery bestowed by God on the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King Fahd Bin Abdul-Aziz Al Sa'ud of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, beseeching God most High and most Powerful to grant him everlasting health and well-being and to bring ever-increasing prosperity to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

The Ministerial Council expressed its appreciation of the sincere efforts of the Sultanate of Oman in laying the foundations, at the end of the sixteenth session of the Supreme Council, held at Muscat, for the procedures for the nomination of the Secretary-General of the Gulf Cooperation Council. At that time, the member States adopted the proposal of the Sultanate of Oman that the Secretary-General should be appointed by rotation, based on an alphabetical list of the names of the States, with the understanding that the procedure should be included in the Charter of the Council.

The Ministerial Council discussed the implementation by Iraq of the Security Council resolutions relating to the Iraqi aggression against Kuwait and noted with regret Iraq's failure to satisfy fundamental aspects of its international obligations under those resolutions. The Council also noted the suspicious behaviour of the Iraqi regime with regard to the elimination of weapons of mass destruction. Indeed, the Iraqi regime continues to produce bacteriological weapons of an infectious nature capable of inflicting serious harm on Iraq itself and on the region, in addition to producing chemical and

radiation weapons. In this regard, the Council stresses the importance of supporting the efforts of the United Nations Commission entrusted with the elimination of weapons of mass destruction and calls upon the countries of the world to support those efforts materially and politically in order to guarantee the continuation of the Commission's work. In this connection, the Ministerial Council expressed its concern over the attempts by the Iraqi regime to use certain border points for smuggling in materials for developing its weapons of aggression and over its interference with the missions of the international inspection teams. This violation of Security Council resolution 687 (1991) confirms the failure of the Iraqi regime to respond to all the calls for it to implement the United Nations resolutions relating to its aggression.

The Ministerial Council, painfully aware of the suffering of the fraternal Iraqi people due to the deterioration of living and health conditions, places the full blame on the Iraqi regime, in view of the erroneous policy it has been following throughout this period. It points to the need for Iraq to implement resolution 986 (1995) in order to take advantage of its provisions aimed at dealing with the humanitarian needs of its people and alleviating their cruel suffering.

In this regard, the Council urges the international community to continue its pressure on the Iraqi Government until Iraq fully complies with the provisions of resolution 687 (1991) and other relevant international resolutions, in particular those pertaining to the release of Kuwaiti and other prisoners, whose suffering has been prolonged by this flagrant violation of resolution 687 (1991) and of the third and fourth Geneva Conventions. It demands that the Republic of Iraq refrain from any hostile or provocative activity, in compliance with resolution 949 (1994); abide by the compensation mechanism, returning all property; and demonstrate its peaceful intentions to the international community through its policies and practices.

The Council also once again reaffirms its total rejection of any policy that would tend to impair the territorial integrity of Iraq and expresses its firm insistence on Iraq's sovereignty and the unity of its territory.

The Ministerial Council has studied the recent developments in the relations between the States of the Cooperation Council and the Islamic Republic of Iran and the question of the occupation of the three islands of Tunb al-Kubra, Tunb al-Sughra and Abu Musa, which belong to the United Arab Emirates. The Council noted the Iranian Government's continued implementation of measures aimed at consecrating its occupation of the three islands, such as the building and opening of an airport on Abu Musa on 10 March, which constitutes an unwarranted provocative measure. The Council again expressed its extreme regret at the failure of the Islamic Republic of Iran to respond to the repeated earnest, amicable invitations on the part of the United Arab Emirates aimed at reaching a peaceful solution to this issue. The Council also expressed its concern at the continued adoption by the Iranian Government of measures aimed at consecrating and consolidating its occupation of the three islands, thus violating the sovereignty of the United Arab Emirates and disrupting peace and stability in the region, in violation of the principles of international law, the Charter of the Islamic Conference, the principles of good-neighbourliness

and respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the States of the region.

The Ministerial Council reaffirms its consistent position of support and assistance to the United Arab Emirates and renews its absolute endorsement of all peaceful measures adopted by the United Arab Emirates with a view to regaining its sovereignty over the three islands, Tunb al-Kubra, Tunb al-Sughra and Abu Musa, and calls upon Iran to agree to submit the dispute to the International Court of Justice.

The Ministerial Council discussed developments in the Middle East peace process. Based on the consistent positions of the States members of the Council in support of the peace process in the Middle East and with a view to arriving at a just, comprehensive and durable peace in the region founded on Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) and the principle of land for peace, the Council expressed its great appreciation of the international efforts made in that direction, especially those made by the United States of America in encouraging the parties concerned to make the desired progress on a bilateral basis.

The Council, in expressing its satisfaction at the holding of Palestinian legislative and presidential elections and the completion by the Israeli army of its redeployment away from most of the cities and villages of the West Bank in keeping with the second phase of the Palestinian Self-Government Arrangements, appeals to Israel to end the blockade imposed on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip; to implement the letter and the spirit of the bilateral agreements with the Palestinian side; to refrain from any practices incompatible with the trend towards peace in the region; and to begin the final-phase negotiations on a basis of total Israeli withdrawal from the rest of the occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem, so as to enable the Palestinian people to exercise all its lawful rights, including that of establishing an independent State on its native soil.

The Council also expresses the hope that efforts will be redoubled, especially those of the United States of America, to surmount the obstacles that stand in the way of Syrian-Israeli negotiations, and affirms its full support for the Syrian position calling for Israeli withdrawal from the occupied Syrian Arab Golan to the line of 4 June 1967. The Council also expresses its hope that progress will be achieved in Lebanese-Israeli relations, leading to the end of the Israeli occupation of Southern Lebanon, in accordance with Security Council resolution 425 (1978).

The Council expressed its profound appreciation of the efforts made by the Arab Republic of Egypt, headed by President Mohamed Hosni Mubarak, to ensure the success of the Sharm al-Sheikh Summit for Peacemakers, and highlighted the significance of its positive outcome. It also renewed its full support for those efforts, appealing to all peace-loving States for constructive cooperation with a view to the formulation and implementation of effective practical measures which would help to promote and strengthen the Middle East peace process, safeguard its achievements and accomplishments and thwart any attempts to undermine them or prejudice the security and stability of the region and its future economic development.

The Council called upon the sponsors of the Summit to resume the Madrid Peace Conference on the Middle East with the aim of assessing the outcome of the peace process and of imparting to that process a powerful impetus that would help it to achieve its desired aims.

The Ministerial Council affirms the fact that extremism, violence and terrorism are global phenomena that are not restricted to a particular people or region. It renews its loathing and condemnation of such phenomena and its categorical rejection of all forms of violence and terrorism, particularly those which are detrimental to security and stability in the region or which impede the peace process in the Middle East, and calls upon the international community to coordinate its efforts to stop acts of violence and terrorism, ensure that the perpetrators of such acts are brought to justice, and prevent extremist and terrorist elements from using the territory of any State for purposes of obtaining funding or arms supplies and from availing themselves of the media to incite acts of violence and terrorism.

Recalling the decisions of the Supreme Council at its sixteenth session, held in Muscat, on foreign media controls and media integrity, the Council reaffirms the importance of cooperation among the Council States in addressing biased media campaigns directed against any Council State and in taking common positions towards such campaigns. It equally affirms the importance of counteracting any media and press reports that are injurious to the Council States, of declining any form of support for the media involved and of refraining from quoting and circulating their reports.

The Ministerial Council reviewed the latest situation in the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina and praised the steps taken to implement the Dayton Peace Agreement and affirm the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The Council noted with immense satisfaction the generous reaction by citizens of the Council States in solidarity with the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina in response to the initiatives of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King of Saudi Arabia, and His Highness Sheikh Zayed Bin Sultan Al Nahyan, President of the United Arab Emirates, in organizing collections for donations to the people of Bosnia for the process of reconstruction and redevelopment.

The Ministerial Council also reviewed developments in the conflict between the Republic of Yemen and Eritrea over Hanish island and stressed the need to contain the crisis between the two countries and seek a peaceful solution with a view to promoting justice, maintaining security, preventing escalation of the conflict and strengthening the historical relations between the Republic of Yemen and Eritrea. The Council also stressed that the security of the Red Sea and the guaranteed freedom and safety of shipping therein were a matter of tremendous importance for all States in the region.

The Council appreciates the mediation efforts aimed at achieving genuine agreement between the Republic of Yemen and Eritrea on the principle of peaceful settlement of the crisis in accordance with the rules of international law and the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations.

In the economic field, the Council discussed the external customs tariff and recalled the decision of the Supreme Council at its sixteenth session, held in Muscat on 4 December 1995. It highlighted the joint meeting between the Ministerial Council and the Committee on Financial and Economic Cooperation to be convened in June 1996 to find a solution compatible with the Unified Economic Agreement and the decisions of the Supreme Council that would be sufficiently flexible to obtain the required consensus.

The Council also adopted the executive regulations of the patent system of the Gulf Cooperation Council States and agreed the fees stipulated in that system. The Council negotiated with the administration of the patent office to amend the schedules for such fees whenever necessary.

In the field of negotiations with the European Union, the Council discussed the joint ministerial meeting to be held in Luxembourg next April. It also heard a detailed explanation from the general coordinator of negotiations and highlighted the importance of attaching greater significance to investment and trade between the Council States and the European Union and of giving the private sector the opportunity to express its view on those two questions.

The Council took note of the expert meetings on political and information dialogue recently concluded in Brussels between the Council States and the European Union, as well as of the meetings of businessmen at the European Commission and the opportunities available to them to benefit from the information available at the Commission. The Council also reviewed the strategy and mechanisms of the dialogue previously discussed in Muscat on 4 November 1995 with the Committee on Financial and Economic Cooperation and the Standing Ministerial Committee for Petroleum Cooperation and gave the negotiating team appropriate directives.

The Council expressed its satisfaction at the success of the second conference of industrialists of the Council States and their United States counterparts, held in Manama from 10 to 13 March 1996 under the auspices of His Highness Sheikh Khalifa Bin Salman Al Khalifa, Prime Minister of the sister State of Bahrain, and affirmed the importance and worth of such conferences in promoting the joint interests of the Council States and their partners in international economic groupings.

The Council also examined and took note of various official records of the ministerial committees in the fields of trade, industry, specifications and standards.

The Ministerial Council expressed its profound appreciation and heartfelt gratitude for the tremendous and sincere efforts of His Excellency Sheikh Fahim Bin Sultan al-Qasimi, Secretary-General of the Gulf Cooperation Council, over the past three years, during which considerable achievements were witnessed in the field of cooperation and integration among the Council States at all levels. At the same time, it commended His Excellency's significant contributions to stimulating joint action through quiet diplomacy, and his extraordinary political shrewdness and great aptitude, which had a very positive impact on cooperation.

The Council wished His Excellency Sheikh Fahim Bin Sultan al-Qasimi success in his future missions.

The Ministerial Council expressed its sincere hope that His Excellency Sheikh Jamil Ibrahim al-Hegelan, Secretary-General designate of the Gulf Cooperation Council, would successfully fulfil the mandates assigned to him and that his expertise would serve to promote the Council.

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22 April 1996

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Fifty-first session
Item 97 of the preliminary list*

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND INTERNATIONAL
ECONOMIC COOPERATION

Letter dated 19 April 1996 from the Permanent Representative of Bangladesh to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to enclose a letter dated 19 April 1996 from the Chairmen/Coordinators of the Group of Least Developed Countries, the Group of Land-locked Developing Countries and the Alliance of Small Island States addressed to you (see annex).

I would like to request you to circulate the present letter together with its annex as a document of the General Assembly under agenda item 97 of the preliminary list.

(Signed) Reaz RAHMAN
Ambassador
Permanent Representative of
Bangladesh to the United Nations

* A/51/50.

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ANNEX

Letter dated 19 April 1996 from the representatives of the least developed, land-locked and island developing countries to the Secretary-General

The least developed, land-locked and island developing countries have been following with great interest and appreciation your unremitting efforts towards reorganizing and revitalizing the United Nations Secretariat, including the unit dealing with economic and social issues. We are fully supportive of the objectives of your endeavours and we are committed to providing our support thereto. We believe that the restructuring exercise will provide the Secretariat with great effectiveness in dealing with issues facing the 48 least developed countries, 29 land-locked developing countries and some 32 small island developing States (see attached list).

We are writing the present letter with a view to bringing to your kind attention our views on the future of the Division of Least Developed, Land-locked and Island Developing Countries, presently located within the secretariat of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD). This is the only unit in the United Nations Secretariat that deals substantively with the problems facing our three groups of countries in an integrated and comprehensive manner.

The Second United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, held in Paris in 1990, adopted unanimously the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the 1990s. At its forty-fifth session, the General Assembly endorsed the Programme of Action and decided upon the level of resources for the task of follow-up to it throughout the 1990s. In consequence of the decision of the Assembly, the Division for the Least Developed, Land-locked and Island Developing Countries was established within the UNCTAD secretariat in early 1991. Following the Global Conference on the Substantive Development on Small Island Developing States, the General Assembly at its forty-ninth session requested that the capacity of UNCTAD be strengthened in order to support the implementation of the Programme of Action adopted by that Conference.

Substantively, this Division serves as the focal point for the follow-up and monitoring of progress in the implementation of the Programmes of Action for these countries. The Division acts as the global-level focal point for the follow-up to the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the 1990s adopted by the Second United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries in 1990. It is charged with the implementation of the Global Framework for Transit Transport Cooperation between Land-locked and Transit Developing Countries and the Donor Community, endorsed by the General Assembly in 1995. It is also entrusted with the crucial mandate relating to the Barbados Programme of Action for Small Island Developing States adopted in 1994. The substantive analytical work on the issues raised in the Programmes of Action for these groups of countries are reflected in its various reports, in particular the annual Least Developed Countries Report. This is considered to be of immense utility and has won the admiration of Governments, the international

community and media alike. The Division assists our countries in negotiations in different international forums through substantive support; maintains the only database in the United Nations; is specific to the needs of these groups of countries; plays a strong advocacy role; mobilizes bodies of the United Nations system in favour of the implementation of their programmes of action; maintains substantive dialogue with Governments at United Nations Headquarters; and ensures that their situation and solutions to their problems remain at the forefront of the intergovernmental process.

In this regard and in the context of the reform and revitalization of the United Nations, it is the expectation of our three groups of countries that the Division for Least Developed, Land-locked and Island Developing Countries should be strengthened further, inter alia, through substantive appointment of a Director and if possible by enhancing its level of leadership. Indeed, the entire international community has unanimously expressed the priority it attaches to the development problématique of the least developed countries within the development activities of the United Nations. As you yourself emphasized at the High-level Intergovernmental Meeting on the Mid-term Global Review of the Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the 1990s, held in New York last autumn, the United Nations system remains committed to the task of taking stronger actions in favour of the least developed countries, and UNCTAD must continue to play a strong leadership role in this area. This position had been echoed by others. The representative of the United States Government, speaking at the Trade and Development Board on 27 February 1996, said:

> "The United States believes that UNCTAD has a single purpose: fully integrate developing countries, particularly the least developed countries, into the global economy."

The representative of the European Union, speaking at the same meeting, emphasized that UNCTAD should concentrate primarily on the needs of the least developed countries. From the foregoing it is clear that there is unanimity of views that the activities of the United Nations in favour of these countries should be strengthened.

In the light of the above, we would like to urge you to ensure that:

(a) The institutional identity and integrity of the Division for the Least Developed, Land-locked and Island Developing Countries, located within the UNCTAD secretariat, should be strengthened;

(b) The analytical capacity of the Division should be further strengthened by the provision of adequate resources. The studies and the reports, including the annual Least Developed Countries Report and other important reports that the Division publishes and are considered extremely valuable by these groups of countries, should be maintained;

(c) A full-time Director of the Division should be appointed immediately and all other vacant posts of the Division should be filled on an urgent basis. Consideration should also be given to enhancing the level of leadership of the Division. You may also wish to consider consolidating activities by different

parts of the United Nations Secretariat under the Division of Least Developed, Land-locked and Island Developing Countries, which should enhance efficiency and effectiveness.

We are fully confident that the ongoing restructuring of the United Nations Secretariat under your leadership would result in a strengthened and more efficient institutional machinery within the United Nations Secretariat dealing with the critical situation of our three groups of countries.

(Signed) Reaz RAHMAN
Permanent Representative of
Bangladesh to the United Nations and
Chairman of the Group of Least
Developed Countries

(Signed) Luvsangiin ERDENECHULUUN
Permanent Representative of Mongolia
to the United Nations and Coordinator
of the Land-locked Developing
Countries on UNCTAD Matters

(Signed) Yvonne GITTENS-JOSEPH
For the Permanent Representative of
Trinidad and Tobago to the United
Nations and Chairman of the Alliance
of Small Island States

APPENDIX

Least developed countries

Afghanistan, Angola, Bangladesh, Benin, Bhutan, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cambodia, Cape Verde, the Central African Republic, Chad, the Comoros, Djibouti, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Ethiopia, the Gambia, Guinea-Bissau, Guinea, Haiti, Kiribati, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lesotho, Liberia, Madagascar, Malawi, Maldives, Mali, Mauritania, Mozambique, Myanmar, Nepal, the Niger, Rwanda, Samoa, Sao Tome and Principe, Sierra Leone, Solomon Islands, Somalia, the Sudan, Togo, Tuvalu, Uganda, the United Republic of Tanzania, Vanuatu, Yemen, Zaire and Zambia.

Land-locked developing countries

Afghanistan, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bhutan, Bolivia, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Burundi, the Central African Republic, Chad, Ethiopia, Kazakstan, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lesotho, Malawi, Mali, Mongolia, Nepal, the Niger, Paraguay, Rwanda, Swaziland, Tajikistan, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkmenistan, Uganda, Uzbekistan, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

Alliance of Small Island States

Atlantic

Cape Verde, Guinea-Bissau and Sao Tome and Principe.

Caribbean

Antigua and Barbuda, the Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Cuba, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname and Trinidad and Tobago.

Indian Ocean

The Comoros, Maldives, Mauritius and Seychelles.

Mediterranean

Cyprus and Malta.

Pacific

The Cook Islands,* Fiji, Kiribati,* the Marshall Islands, Micronesia (Federated States of), Nauru,* Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga,* Tuvalu* and Vanuatu.

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* Not members of the United Nations.

South China Sea

Singapore.

Observers*

American Samoa, Guam, the Netherlands Antilles, Niue and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

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* Not members of the United Nations.

UNITED
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Fifty-first session
Item 41 of the preliminary list*

SUPPORT BY THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM OF THE EFFORTS OF GOVERNMENTS TO PROMOTE AND CONSOLIDATE NEW OR RESTORED DEMOCRACIES

Letter dated 22 April 1996 from the Permanent Representatives of Belarus and the Russian Federation to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

We hereby have the honour to transmit the text of the Treaty on the Formation of an Association between the Russian Federation and the Republic of Belarus, signed in Moscow on 2 April 1996 (see annex).

We should be grateful if you would have this letter and its anne.. circulated as a document of the General Assembly under item 41 of the preliminary list.

(Signed) A. SYCHOU
Ambassador
Permanent Representative
of the Republic of Belarus
to the United Nations

(Signed) S. LAVROV
Ambassador
Permanent Representative
of the Russian Federation
to the United Nations

* A/51/50.

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Annex

Treaty on the Formation of an Association between the Russian Federation and the Republic of Belarus, signed in Moscow on 2 April 1996

The Russian Federation and the Republic of Belarus, hereinafter referred to as the Parties,

Taking as a basis the historically forged common destiny of their peoples,

Relying on their wish for future rapprochement as expressed by the results of the referendum of May 1995 in Belarus and the decisions of October 1995 taken by the chambers of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation,

Taking as a basis the provisions of the Treaty of 21 February 1995 on friendship, good-neighbourliness and cooperation between the Russian Federation and Belarus,

Confirming their participation in the Commonwealth of Independent States and the Treaty of 29 March 1996 between the Republic of Belarus, the Republic of Kazakstan, the Kyrgyz Republic and the Russian Federation on deepening integration in the economic and humanitarian fields,

Have agreed as follows:

Article 1

The Parties have voluntarily decided, with a view to uniting the material and intellectual potential of the two States in order to boost their economies and create equal conditions for raising the standard of living of their peoples and the spiritual development of the individual, to form an Association of the Russian Federation and Belarus that is profoundly integrated both politically and economically.

Article 2

The Association shall be based on the principles of sovereignty and equality of the Parties, democracy and respect for human rights and the generally accepted principles and standards of international law.

Article 3

The Parties shall coordinate their foreign policy and common positions on fundamental international questions, and shall cooperate in ensuring security, guarding borders and combating crime.

In order to ensure reliable security, the Parties shall elaborate common principles of military organizational development and the use of elements of military infrastructure in accordance with national legislation.

Article 4

In order to establish a single economic area, the effective functioning of a common market and the free movement of goods, services, capital and labour, before the end of 1997 the Parties shall synchronize the stages, deadlines and extent of the economic reforms to be implemented, establish a single normative-legal base to eliminate any interstate barriers and restrictions, and establish equal opportunities for free economic activity.

During this period the Parties shall form a unified system of anti-monopoly legislation, taxation, State support for production, the investments regime and standards and rules for labour protection, and shall also complete the establishment of a common customs area with a unified administrative service.

Article 5

The Parties shall ensure that measures are taken before the end of 1996 to form a common transport system with unified tariffs for the conveyance of goods and passengers, a unified power network and a common scientific, technological and information area.

Article 6

From 1997 the Parties shall agree on a structural policy for the future development of their economies, with a view to the establishment of industrial and agricultural economic complexes based on mutual complementarity of the economies, maximum use of the advantages of a rational division of labour, and specialization and collaboration in production.

With effect from 1997, a transition shall be made to drawing up joint balances of production capacities and their coordinated use in the interests of the Parties.

Article 7

Unification of the financial, credit and budget systems of the Parties shall be carried out before the end of 1997, and conditions shall be created for the introduction of a common currency.

Article 8

The Parties:

Shall guarantee the equal rights of citizens of the Parties in the fields of education, job placement, remuneration for labour, and provision of other social guarantees;

Shall introduce unified standards of social protection;

Shall guarantee the equal right of physical persons to acquire property for the purposes of ownership, possession, use and enjoyment in their territory;

Shall equalize the terms of pension support and the levels of allowances and entitlements for war and labour veterans, the disabled and low-income families;

Shall unify standards in the field of labour protection, social insurance and industrial and social hygiene;

Shall establish a common database for questions relating to the employment of the population and the existence of job vacancies.

Article 9

The supreme body of the Association shall be the Supreme Council, which shall comprise the Heads of State and Government, the leaders of the parliaments of the Parties, and the Chairman of the Executive Committee.

Within the limits of the powers of the Association, the Supreme Council shall examine and decide on the most important issues affecting the development of the Association, and shall monitor and direct the work of its organs in carrying out the decisions it has adopted.

The Supreme Council shall determine where the organs of the Association are to be located.

The Supreme Council shall elect a Chairman on a rotational basis for a two-year term.

Decisions of the Supreme Council shall be adcpted by consensus, each Party having one vote. The Chairman of the Executive Committee shall have an advisory role.

The Supreme Council shall approve its own statute.

Article 10

The Parties shall establish a Parliamentary Assembly formed of an equal number of parliamentarians from each Party.

The Parliamentary Assembly shall adopt model laws and submit appropriate proposals to bodies having the right of legislative initiative, the parliaments of the Parties and the Supreme Council with regard to questions pertaining to the development of the legal basis of the Association.

Decisions of the Parliamentary Assembly shall be adopted by a qualified majority of votes.

Meetings of the Parliamentary Assembly shall be deemed to be legally constituted if at least two thirds of the deputies from each Party are present.

The Parliamentary Assembly shall adopt its own rules of procedure.

Article 11

In order to organize practical work on the implementation of the Treaty, the Supreme Council shall establish an Executive Committee as the standing executive body, and also sector-based administrative bodies.

The Chairman of the Executive Committee shall be appointed by the Supreme Council.

The Executive Council shall include an equal number of representatives of the Parties. The representatives of the Parties appointed to serve on the Executive Committee shall be approved by the respective Heads of State.

The Executive Committee:

Shall elaborate projects and programmes to implement the aims and tasks of the Association, proposals to finance measures carried out by the Association and proposals to establish bodies and organizations to address the relevant tasks of the Association, and shall submit them to the Supreme Council for approval;

Shall elaborate and approve measures to implement decisions of the Supreme Council and approved projects and programmes of the Association, and organize and monitor their implementation;

Shall coordinate the work of other bodies and organizations recruited by each Party to implement the projects and programmes of the Association;

Shall conclude in its own right relevant civil rights agreements;

Shall provide financial and other support for feasible projects, programmes and specific measures in line with the resources allocated to the budget of the Association;

Shall submit an annual report to the Supreme Council on the progress that has been made in implementing the projects and programmes of the Association.

The functions of the Executive Committee and the procedure governing its activity shall be determined by a Statute on the said Committee, to be approved by the Supreme Council.

The Executive Committee shall have a staff, the size of which shall be determined by the Supreme Council.

Article 12

The functions of the bodies of the Association which are to be established shall be as follows:

Prosecution of a common economic and social policy, elaboration and implementation of joint programmes;

Formation of a single normative-legal base;

Implementation of measures designed to unify the financial, credit, taxation and budget systems;

Elaboration and implementation of measures to create conditions for the introduction of a common currency;

Formation of a single power, transport and communications system;

Rational location of new production capacity and modernization of existing capacity;

Cooperation in resolving questions involving the employment of the population;

Coordinated conduct of foreign economic relations;

Joint organization of customs procedure;

Establishment of common norms and standards, systems of measurement and statistics;

Every possible assistance in developing a common scientific, educational and cultural area;

Cooperation to ensure protection of the environment and elimination of the consequences of accidents and natural disasters;

Establishment of a single meteorological service;

Cooperation to ensure the security and protection of borders.

Article 13

The Supreme Council and the Executive Committee shall be entitled to the extent of their competence to make immediately executable decisions, without prejudice to the Constitutions of the Parties, or decisions which need to be incorporated into national legislation.

Article 14

The budget of the Association shall be funded by an annual allocation of resources from the State budgets of the Parties, and shall be used to finance common programmes and maintain Association bodies.

On the basis of supplementary agreements, the Parties shall transfer to Association bodies such property as they may need to exercise the powers entrusted to them. This property shall be jointly owned by the Parties and used solely in their common interest.

Article 15

While participating in the Association, each Party shall preserve its State sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity, its Constitution, State flag, emblem, national anthem and other attributes of State authority.

Article 16

The States comprising the Association shall be subjects of international law; they shall independently establish diplomatic, consular, trade and other relations with foreign States and conclude international treaties.

The Parties shall retain their membership in the United Nations and other international organizations.

Article 17

The future development of the Association and its structure shall be determined by referendums which shall be held in the territories of the Parties in accordance with their national legislation.

Article 18

This Treaty is open for accession by other States sharing its aims and principles and willing to assume to the full the commitments arising from the Treaty.

Article 19

This Treaty shall be applicable on a provisional basis from the date of its signature; it shall be subject to ratification and shall enter into force on the date of exchange of the instruments of ratification.

DONE at Moscow on 2 April 1996 in two copies, in the Russian and Belarusian languages, both texts being equally authentic.

For the Russian Federation:

(Signed) B. YELTSIN

For the Republic of Belarus:

(Signed) A. LUKASHENKA

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Fifty-first session
Item 41 of the preliminary list*

SUPPORT BY THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM OF THE EFFORTS OF GOVERNMENTS TO PROMOTE AND CONSOLIDATE NEW OR RESTORED DEMOCRACIES

Letter dated 23 April 1996 from the Permanent Representatives of Belarus, Kazakstan, Kyrgyzstan and the Russian Federation to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

We have the honour to transmit to you herewith the text of the Treaty between the Russian Federation, the Republic of Belarus, the Republic of Kazakstan and the Kyrgyz Republic on deepening integration in the economic and humanitarian fields, signed in Moscow on 29 March 1996 (see annex).

I should be grateful if this letter and its annex were circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under item 41 of the preliminary list.

(Signed) A. SYCHOU
Ambassador
Permanent Representative
of the Republic of
Belarus to the United
Nations

(Signed) A. ARYSTANBEKOVA
Ambassador
Permanent Representative
of the Republic of
Kazakstan to the
United Nations

(Signed) A. AITMATOV
Ambassador
Acting Permanent
Representative of
the Kyrgyz Republic
to the United
Nations

(Signed) S. LAVROV
Ambassador
Permanent Representative
of the Russian
Federation to the
United Nations

* A/51/50.

ANNEX

Treaty between the Russian Federation, the Republic of Belarus, the Republic of Kazakstan and the Kyrgyz Republic on Deepening Integration in the Economic and Humanitarian Fields, signed in Moscow on 29 March 1996

The Russian Federation, the Republic of Belarus, the Republic of Kazakstan and the Kyrgyz Republic, hereinafter referred to as the Parties,

Proceeding on the basis of the historically established ties among their peoples and their aspiration for further integration and all-round closer relations,

Aware of the need to exploit in a coordinated manner the material and intellectual potential of their States,

Recognizing the State independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Parties,

Affirming their participation in the Commonwealth of Independent States and their readiness to carry out within its framework processes to promote integration,

Guided by the generally recognized norms and principles of international law,

Have agreed as follows:

Objectives and principles

Article 1

In order to establish integrated States within the framework of the Commonwealth, the Parties have decided to focus joint efforts on deepening on a stage-by-stage basis the integration of the Parties to this Treaty in the economic, scientific, educational, cultural, social and other fields, while observing the sovereignty of the Parties, the principles of equality and mutual advantage, the inviolability of the State borders existing between them and non-interference in one another's affairs.

Article 2

The following shall be the basic objectives of integration:

Consistent improvement of living conditions, protection of personal rights and freedoms and achievement of social progress;

Ensuring the stable democratic development of the States;

Establishment of a single economic area providing for the effective functioning of a common market for goods, services, capital and manpower, and the development of unified transport, energy and information systems;

Development of minimum standards of social protection for citizens;

Ensuring equal opportunities for receiving an education and access to the benefits of scientific and cultural achievements;

Harmonization of legislation;

Coordination of foreign policy and securing a respected place in the international arena;

Joint protection of the external borders of the Parties and combating crime and terrorism.

Economic cooperation

Article 3

The Parties shall coordinate the basic areas, stages and time-frames for carrying out economic reforms, create the necessary conditions for the functioning of a common market, and ensure equally favourable conditions for free economic activities by business entities of their States.

The Parties shall ensure an equal right to acquire, own, use and manage private property in the territory of any of these States in accordance with their national legislation.

The Parties shall establish a unified model normative basis for civil legislation and State economic regulation.

Article 4

The Parties shall conduct a coordinated price-formation policy excluding price discrimination against business entities of the Parties and shall apply the free (agreed) prices that obtain on their domestic markets.

The Parties shall complete, in 1996, the establishment of a single customs area with a common system of administration.

Article 5

The Parties shall agree on a structural policy aimed at establishing industrial and agrarian business networks based on complementarity of economies and maximum use of the advantages derived from a rational division of labour.

Article 6

The Parties shall jointly develop and implement a set of measures to provide State support for developing a production cooperative system, encouraging production-related capital investment, including the subsidization of special-purpose programmes and projects and the establishment of facilities that are of common interest, and shall promote the formation of transnational associations.

Article 7

The Parties shall consistently enhance the coordination of policies in the monetary, credit, foreign-currency and financial fields and establish an effective payment and settlement system.

Initially, the Parties shall strive to bring about a considerable reduction in inflation, stabilize exchange rates for national currencies and achieve complete convertibility of national currencies and shall guarantee equal access by persons who are residents of the Parties to the currency markets of the States parties to this Treaty. The central banks of the Parties shall establish an interbank association in order to conduct mutual consultations and coordinate measures being implemented.

At subsequent stages, the Parties shall effect a transition to unified standards and practice for regulating banking activities and, depending on the degree of integration achieved, shall introduce a single currency.

Article 8

The Parties shall establish a single scientific and technological area and ensure cooperation in conducting basic and applied scientific research, including the organization of joint scientific work on problems of common interest.

Article 9

The Parties shall expand cooperation in the field of environmental protection, including the development and adoption of unified standards for environmental safety, and shall take joint measures to prevent and eliminate the consequences of accidents, natural disasters, and nuclear and environmental disasters.

Cooperation in the social and cultural fields

Article 10

The Parties shall conduct a coordinated social policy, harmonize national social-protection systems, bring about a phased equalization of pension coverage, allowances and entitlements for war and labour veterans, disabled persons and low-income families.

Article 11

The Parties shall create conditions for maintaining and consolidating the common cultural area on the basis of historically established ties and practical contacts between creative unions and associations, persons active in cultural affairs, literature and art, and protecting the distinctive ethnic and linguistic identity of peoples.

Article 12

The Parties shall define an inter-State strategy for education and develop joint programmes for instructing students and training and retraining specialists.

The Parties shall recognize, on a reciprocal basis and without authentication, diplomas, education certificates and corresponding documents on the granting of academic degrees and titles.

Article 13

Citizens of the Parties who are permanent residents in the territory of other States Parties to this Treaty shall be granted the legal status established under their national legislation and bilateral and multilateral treaties; provision shall be made for a simplified procedure for acquisition of citizenship by citizens of the Parties.

Cooperation in other fields

Article 14

Taking into account the experience acquired in cooperation, the Parties shall enhance the mechanism for coordinating action in planning and implementing foreign policy and establishing and consolidating a common system to ensure security and the protection of State borders.

Article 15

The Parties shall coordinate work on draft laws, draw up model laws, exchange legal information, provide legal assistance with regard to cases relating to civil, family and criminal law and promote the development of jurisprudence and the training of legal personnel.

Article 16

The Parties shall ensure close cooperation on the part of law-enforcement and other competent bodies, join efforts to combat general crime and organized crime, terrorism, illegal trafficking in weapons and narcotic drugs, smuggling, illegal immigration and emigration, the manufacture and use of counterfeit payment instruments and other documents, and any actions that pose a threat to public safety or the execution of court decisions.

Bodies to administer integration

Article 17

The Parties shall establish the following joint bodies to administer integration in order to achieve the objectives of this Treaty: the Inter-State Council, the Integration Committee and the Interparliamentary Committee.

Each of these bodies shall function within the framework of the powers entrusted to it under this Treaty and the corresponding statute governing it.

Article 18

The Inter-State Council shall be the highest body for administering integration. Heads of State, Heads of Government, Ministers for Foreign Affairs and also the chairman of the Integration Committee, who shall have deliberative functions without a vote, shall be represented on the Council.

The Inter-State Council shall be headed by a president elected by the Heads of State of the Parties for a one-year term on a rotation basis.

The Inter-State Council shall draw up a strategy for cooperation, define its basic stages, take the corresponding decisions and monitor their implementation, and approve the statutes governing the bodies to administer integration and the procedures for their financing.

The costs of maintaining the bodies to administer integration shall be borne by the Parties at fixed rates and the funds allocated shall be used exclusively for that purpose.

Article 19

The Integration Committee shall be the standing executive body that adopts and implements measures necessary to achieve the objectives and goals of integration set forth in this Treaty.

The Integration Committee shall be composed of the first deputy heads of Government of each of the Parties as well as the ministers responsible for questions relating to cooperation with the States members of the Commonwealth of Independent States, and the economies and finances of the Parties.

The Integration Committee shall be headed by a chairman appointed by the Inter-State Council on a rotation basis.

The Integration Committee shall:

Monitor, through the Governments of the Parties, implementation of decisions by the bodies to administer integration;

Ensure, within the limits of its competence, the implementation of decisions by the Inter-State Council, integration programmes, and treaties and agreements in force between the Parties;

Establish corresponding inter-State commissions and committees, and hire independent experts in various fields of economics, law, administration and other areas of integration.

Article 20

Informational, logistical and organizational support for the activities of the Inter-State Council and the other bodies to administer integration shall be provided by the staff of the Integration Committee, who shall be hired on the basis of parity.

The bodies to administer integration shall be situated, on the basis of agreement, in the capitals of States Parties to the Treaty.

Article 21

The Integration Committee shall issue a publication - the Bulletin on the Development of Integration - in order to provide information on the practical work and results of integration by the Parties and publish official legal decisions and other documents of the administering bodies.

Article 22

The Interparliamentary Committee shall be the body for promoting interparliamentary cooperation and shall be made up, on the basis of the

principles of parity, of members of Parliament delegated by the parliaments of the Parties.

In order to bring closer and harmonize the legislation of the Parties, the Interparliamentary Committee, within the limits of its powers, shall:

Adopt model laws on the basis of which national legislation shall be drawn up,

Submit proposals relating to the development of the legal basis for integration,

Participate in other forms of legislative activity provided for in the statute of the Interparliamentary Committee.

Recommendatory decisions by the Interparliamentary Committee shall be submitted for consideration by the parliaments of the Parties in the manner prescribed by their national legislation.

Financial and legal support for integration

Article 23

The Integration Committee shall annually draw up specific proposals on the financial and budgetary aspects of integration and submit them for the consideration of the Inter-State Council.

Article 24

The Inter-State Council may take decisions that are binding on the bodies and organizations of the Parties which ensure their direct implementation as well as decisions to be incorporated into the national legislation of the Parties.

The Parties shall ensure the responsibility of officials of their State authorities for implementing the provisions of this Treaty and decisions by the joint bodies to administer integration.

Disagreement arising in the implementation of this Treaty shall be resolved by means of consultation between the Parties and, where necessary, by the Inter-State Council in accordance with a statement to that effect by the Integration Committee.

Article 25

The provisions of this Treaty shall not restrict the economic or political relations of any of the Parties with other countries of the world community, shall not be detrimental to the international legal personality of any of the Parties and shall not affect their obligations under international treaties and

agreements adopted earlier, including those adopted within the framework of the Commonwealth of Independent States.

Final provisions

Article 26

This Treaty shall be applied provisionally from the date of its signature and shall enter into force on the date on which the depositary, which the Russian Federation has been recognized as, receives notification confirming completion by the Parties of the internal State procedures required for the Treaty's entry into force.

Article 27

This Treaty is open for accession by other States which share its objectives and principles and assume in full the obligations under it.

The Parties to the Treaty, recognizing the possibility of integration at various levels within the framework of the Commonwealth of Independent States may sign bilateral and multilateral agreements providing for more advanced integration relations in the political, economic and other fields.

Article 28

This Treaty shall be in force for a period of five years and shall then be automatically extended for subsequent five-year periods unless one of the Parties announces its desire to terminate it at least 12 months prior to the expiry of its period of validity.

Each Party shall have the right to denounce this Treaty by so notifying the depositary in writing at least 12 months in advance.

DONE at Moscow on 29 March 1996 in quadruplicate in the Byelorussian, Kazak, Kyrgyz and Russian languages, all texts being equally authentic. The original texts of the Treaty shall be kept in the Russian Federation, which shall transmit to each of the States Parties to the Treaty its certified copy.

FOR THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION	FOR THE REPUBLIC OF BELARUS	FOR THE REPUBLIC OF KAZAKSTAN	FOR THE KYRGYZ REPUBLIC
(Signed) B. YELTSIN	(Signed) A. LUKASHENKO	(Signed) N. NAZARBAYEV	(Signed) A. AKAEV

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Fifty-first session
Item 66 of the preliminary list*

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE COMPREHENSIVE NUCLEAR-TEST-BAN TREATY

Letter dated 23 April 1996 from the Permanent Representative of Italy to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

On behalf of the European Union, I have the honour to transmit to you herewith a declaration of the Presidency of the European Union on the comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty negotiations.

I would be grateful if you could have the text of the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under item 66 of the preliminary list.

(Signed) F. Paolo FULCI

* A/51/50.

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Annex

DECLARATION BY THE EUROPEAN UNION ON THE COMPREHENSIVE NUCLEAR-TEST-BAN TREATY NEGOTIATIONS

The European Union attaches the highest priority and is strongly committed to the conclusion, before the end of the spring session of the Conference on Disarmament, of the negotiations on a comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty that will prohibit any nuclear-weapon-test explosion or any other nuclear explosion, so as to enable its signature by autumn, at the outset of the fifty-first session of the General Assembly.

The European Union stresses the importance of ensuring that the treaty is universal and is internationally and effectively verifiable.

Such a treaty will be a concrete step in the full realization and effective implementation of article VI of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. It will contribute to the prevention of the proliferation of nuclear weapons, to the process of nuclear disarmament and therefore to the enhancement of international peace and security.

The European Union welcomes and endorses the "zero yield" option supported by a large number of countries and calls on those countries that have not yet done so to subscribe to this position.

The European Free Trade Association countries members of the European Economic Area, the Central and Eastern European countries associated with the European Union and the associated countries, Cyprus and Malta, align themselves with the present declaration.